

DLC TRAINING FOCUS: ACCELERATING LEADERSHIP ABILITIES

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LEADERSHIP EXPLAINED

“A good leader inspires people to have confidence in the leader, a great leader inspires people to have confidence in themselves.” – Eleanor Roosevelt

Leadership is about guiding and directing people towards a common goal. While this might sound like another term for management, the definition is different because it emphasises vision, inspiration, and motivation in order to influence others. Effective leaders are personable, and this allows them to connect with their team, build strong relationships, and empower individuals to reach their full potential.

Why are leaders important in the workplace?

Leaders are crucial in the workplace as they drive not only the strategic direction of an organisation but also the day-to-day operations that keep it running smoothly. Effective leaders foster a positive work environment, encourage employee engagement, and cultivate a culture of accountability and innovation. Strong leadership also impacts employee retention, as a significant majority (86%) of workers cite leadership as a key factor in their decision of whether to stay with a company.

Effective leaders are essential in the workplace to enhance operational efficiency, boost morale, and achieve higher financial performance, to ultimately ensure sustained growth and competitiveness.

In this guide

In this guide, we will cover the key competencies of effective leadership and identify the weakest elements that leaders need to work on. From there, we will consider how these elements can be improved in order to accelerate leadership capabilities, and the barriers that may prevent individuals from reaching their leadership goals in the workplace.

BRIDGING THE GAP	WEAKEST COMPETENCIES	BARRIERS	TYPES OF LEADERSHIP TRAINING
Explore the essential competencies required for effective leadership.	Discover the key competencies contributing to the leadership gap.	Learn about the obstacles to closing the leadership gap and strategies to overcome them.	A comparison of leadership training formats.

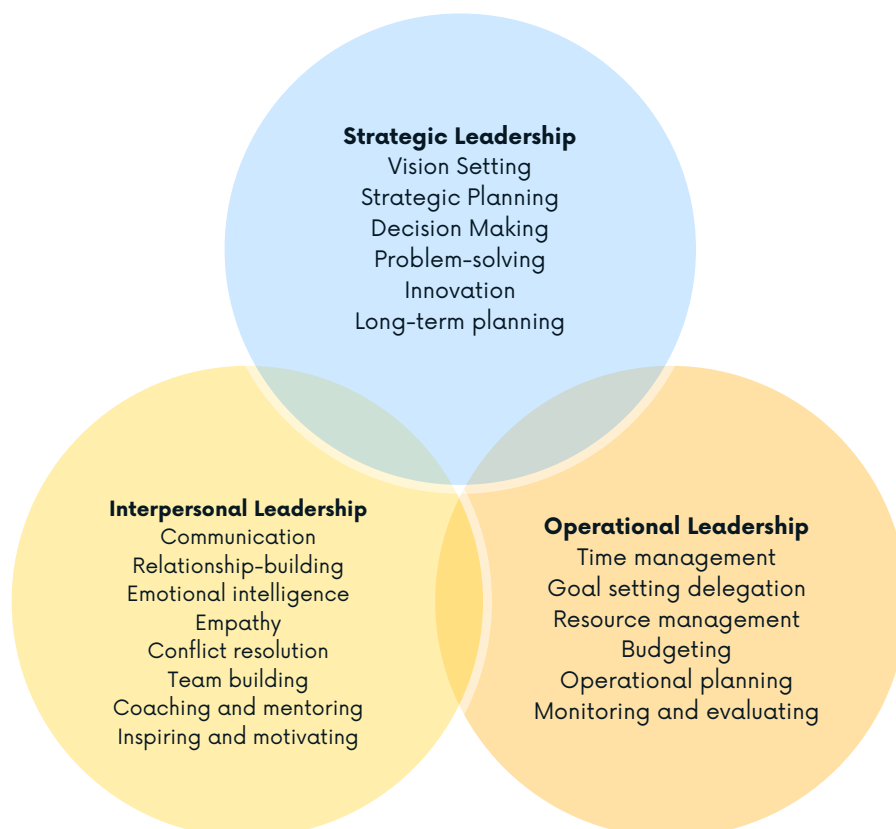
THE LEADERSHIP GAP

Although it's clear that leaders have a significant impact on the success of the business, 77% of organisations report they are experiencing a gap in their leadership capabilities. The primary cause of leadership gaps in the workplace is the lack of necessary skills required for effective leadership. Research indicates that employees receive an average of 62.4 hours of training each year.

In his book *Outliers: The Story of Success*, Malcolm Gladwell posits that it takes around 10,000 hours of practice to master a skill. Although the 10,000-hour rule, based on research carried out by Anders Ericsson, may not apply universally, it sheds light on why leadership abilities are often lacking. Leadership is a skill that requires significant time and resources to develop, emphasising the need for dedicated training and practice to lead effectively.

Bridging the gap

To enhance leadership capabilities, it's essential to identify key competencies in leadership and recognise the areas that may be deficient and contributing to the leadership gap. Effective leadership is made up of key competencies that span strategic leadership, interpersonal leadership and operational leadership.



BRIDGING THE GAP

Among the competencies, four stand out as critical areas for improvement in most leadership roles. Leaders must focus on these areas to enhance their abilities. These include:

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

- Long-term planning
- Change management

INTERPERSONAL LEADERSHIP

- Relationship-building
- Inspiring and motivating others

Long term planning

Long-term planning involves setting strategic objectives that can only be achieved over a long period of time. It's about identifying future goals and taking the relevant steps to achieve them.

For effective long-term planning it is essential to follow the steps below.

1. Create SMART goals (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-specific)
2. Prioritise goals in order of importance
3. Break long-term goals into smaller, short-term goals
4. Be flexible enough to change plans when required
5. Track progress throughout to ensure the plan is on track

Change Management

Change management is a process of planning, implementing, and monitoring changes within an organisation in a systematic and structured manner. This involves identifying the need for change, creating a strategy for implementation, and ensuring that everyone affected by the change is on board and involved throughout the process. Change management is essential for helping organisations adapt to new technologies, market trends, or ways of doing business, and it plays a crucial role in ensuring that these changes are successful and sustainable in the long run.

It's vital for leaders to plan thoroughly in order to carry out a successful change management initiative.

Many leaders fall at the first hurdle, because without a well-considered plan it can be a challenge to get others on board. Creating a plan for change management includes:

- Analysing the current state of operations
- Identifying the desired outcomes
- Creating a timeline for achieving those goals

A well-thought-out plan helps leaders anticipate potential roadblocks and develop strategies to overcome them.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Relationship building in the workplace is the process of developing and nurturing positive connections with team members and other colleagues. This is essential for creating a collaborative, productive, and harmonious working environment.

There are a number of ways leaders can improve their relationship building skills:

- Build trust by being reliable, honest, and acting with integrity.
- Support team members with knowledge and expertise.
- Engage in active listening and encourage open communication.
- Show empathy when team members are facing challenges.
- Resolve conflict quickly and constructively to prevent escalation.
- Recognise and appreciate team members' efforts and achievements.
- Engage in general conversations that aren't about work.

Inspiring and motivating others

This relates to a leader's ability to motivate and engage their team by fostering a sense of purpose, demonstrating passion and enthusiasm, and encouraging innovation within the workplace.

There are a number of ways leaders can inspire and motivate their teams:
Visionary thinking: provide a sense of purpose and direction by giving a clear and compelling vision of the future.

Passion and enthusiasm: demonstrate genuine passion and enthusiasm for the organisation's goal. This will motivate others to do the same.

Lead by example: leaders shouldn't just tell others to do the hard work, they should demonstrate that they're willing to do it themselves. This sets a standard for team members to follow.

Communication: it's also important to communicate ideas and articulate a clear and compelling vision of the future, providing a sense of direction and purpose.

BARRIERS BRIDGING THE GAP

Leaders often face barriers that impede the development of their capabilities in the workplace. It's crucial to identify and address these obstacles to ensure they don't hinder leadership progress.

Outdated Ideas About Leadership

Leaders are often expected to have all the answers. Because of this expectation, they don't always receive the training they need to develop their skills.

By fostering a learning culture, where everyone is encouraged to develop their skills, employers will consider their leaders' training needs more seriously and leaders will feel more open about developing their skills within the workplace.

Digital Disruption

As technology advances and more employees have the ability to work remotely, leaders have less opportunity to practice their skills. With less opportunity to practice, it makes it more challenging for leaders to naturally develop their skills and identify their areas for improvement.

To overcome the disruption of remote working, leaders should take time to reflect on their abilities. They should also regularly request feedback from their direct managers and members of their team to establish what areas they may need to improve.

Higher Turnover

Long gone are the days employees would stay with one organisation for their entire careers. Nowadays, individuals change employers approximately every 5 years. As a result, organisations have fewer opportunities to develop long-term employees into leaders.

To reduce turnover, employers must provide compelling reasons for employees to stay. According to [LinkedIn](#), employees often leave their roles in search for new challenges, career growth, development opportunities, and higher salaries. Offering more training and development opportunities is an effective strategy to retain talent and facilitate their advancement in the organisation.

TYPES OF LEADERSHIP TRAINING

There are two different training formats that leaders can choose between depending on their preferences and requirements: online training and in-person training.

Online training

Online training consists of individuals accessing their learning content online and working through their subjects at their own pace. Because online training is flexible, there are shorter courses available that cover key aspects, to longer, fully accredited qualifications that cover a broad range of topics.

This type of training is best suited to leaders who:

- Are too busy to travel to training centres.
- Need flexibility to study at their own pace.
- Want to achieve a fully regulated and accredited qualification.

In-person training

In-person training consists of individuals attending workshops and seminars. These are often intensive courses over a period of two or three days, that will cover some of the larger responsibilities of a leader. This will include topics such as delegating effectively, motivating others, setting goals, providing feedback, and performance appraisals.

This type of training is best suited to leaders who:

- Prefer to learn through in-person training methods.
- Want to cover a small number of specific topics.



ACCELERATING LEADERSHIP ABILITIES IN THE WORKPLACE

From the points covered in this guide, is it evident that leaders must continuously develop their skills and abilities. As a first step, it's crucial to consider the various competencies that leaders need to cultivate. Starting with the four key competencies identified earlier is a good approach. Once these are addressed, leaders should then focus on the remaining competencies.

To identify areas for improvement, employers should conduct one-to-one reviews with their employees in leadership roles. This collaborative approach enables open discussions about the competencies, providing insights from both the leader's and the employer's perspectives.

Once all potential skill gaps have been identified, the most suitable training method can be determined for each leader within the business. Since everyone has unique training needs, some may benefit from online training, while others might find in-person training more effective. Additionally, a combination of both methods may be advantageous for certain individuals.

DLC Training offers online [leadership and management training](#) that can be started at any time. Visit our website to explore the available training options or reach out to our friendly Business Team for personalised advice. Contact us at 0800 012 6770 or email us at businessteam@dlctraining.co.uk



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